



To:

Representative David Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair  
Committee on Water & Land

Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair  
Representative Scot Matayoshi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair  
Committee on Finance

From: Maunakea Observatories

**Subj: HB 2024 Relating to Mauna Kea – Comments**

February 19, 2022; 9:00 a.m.; Via Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Tarnas, Nakashima and Luke, Vice Chairs Branco, Matayoshi and Yamashita, and members of the committees:

The undersigned Maunakea Observatories (MKO) directors appreciate this opportunity to offer comments on HB 2024 that establishes a Maunakea stewardship authority.

The essential need for MKO is to secure new land authorizations for the observatories reflecting a long-term commitment by the State of Hawai'i to astronomy which allows us to pursue our missions of scientific discovery on Maunakea beyond the current master and subleases that end in 2033.

The Maunakea Observatories are a collaboration of nonprofit, independent institutions supported by numerous national and international partners and research institutions. Securing new land authorizations gives our partners the confidence to continue funding astronomy in Hawai'i. These funders have injected billions of dollars in Hawai'i over the 50+ year history of MKO. And today, astronomy has a total economic impact to the state of approximately \$220M annually, and provides significant STEM education and workforce development opportunities.

Facility upgrades, investments in new instrumentation and long-term operations planning critically depend on a clear and timely path to a new land authorization.

If the state decides to transfer governance and management control to a new stewardship authority, we urge sufficient time be included for establishing new management plans which require careful thought by multiple stakeholders about complex issues. HB 2024 establishes the framework, but the time to work out the details that serve the mutual best interests of the stakeholders must not be shortchanged. There must also be a careful, transparent process for an orderly transition to the new authority so that our current operations are not subject to undue disruption and our future land

authorizations are not subject to risk and uncertainty that would undermine the confidence of our partners, staff and community.

Whichever entity the state chooses to govern and manage Maunakea beyond the current lease, here is MKO's position:

We will join other stakeholders in the financial support of management and stewardship. We need assurance that the MKOs share will be fair, feasible and financially sustainable.

Astronomy representation in governance and management is essential to assure good decision-making requiring deep knowledge and strategic consideration of astronomy-related issues. In the case of the structure proposed in HB 2024, we firmly believe there should be an Astronomy representative on the governing board.

We strongly support Native Hawaiian and local community involvement in governance and management to ensure the mutual interests of MKO, the community, and the state of Hawai'i are met.

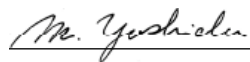
Thank you for your consideration of our comments and we welcome the opportunity to work with you on this important issue.

Mahalo,



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Director Hilton Lewis, W. M. Keck Observatory (Keck I and Keck II)



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Director Michitoshi Yoshida, Subaru Telescope



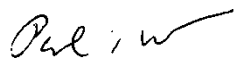
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Interim Director Andy Sheinis, Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope



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Director John Rayner, NASA Infrared Telescope Facility



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Director General Paul Ho, East Asian Observatory